

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee - 16 May 2018

Scrutiny Committee - 13 June 2018

Housing and Adult Social Care Complaints and Customer Feedback

Report by Executive Director (Housing and Environment) (18/163)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides details of complaints received between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 across Housing and Adult Social Care. Information on the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received is also detailed, with examples of feedback from customer satisfaction surveys. The report also provides an overview of actions taken to improve services as a result of customer feedback.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In Perth and Kinross, we value what people tell us about our services by way of complaints and other customer feedback. Complaints are an important way of service users letting us know what they think about the services we deliver and are a key aspect of our quality assurance arrangements. We use the information gathered during the complaints process to support learning as well as a basis for making specific improvements to our services, where such requirements are identified. We are committed to providing high quality services. However, we do accept that sometimes things can go wrong, and, if it does, we aim to resolve issues as promptly as we can, in line with our procedures.
- 1.2 The Council has a responsibility to establish and maintain a formal procedure for receiving and considering complaints by, or on behalf of, people who use services. This is confirmed in government guidance, which expects local authorities to report annually on the complaints investigated and the outcomes of these. This is the first year that Social Work complaints have been subject to the same process as all other complaints in the Council. This is as a result of the introduction of the new model Complaints Handling procedure for Social Work in April 2017.
- 1.3 The findings of complaints are shared with the relevant managers and across management teams to address any specific or cross- service issues, recommendations or improvement actions.
- 1.4 Handling complaints effectively is an important part of good customer care. It demonstrates that services listen to their service users'/stakeholders' views, and also helps to improve services.

- 1.5 A new way of handing complaints was introduced by the Council in April 2013 for all complaints other than those relating to social work services. As a result, they are now dealt with in two stages, with the aim of resolving as many complaints at the front line (stage 1 front line resolution) to try to reduce the need for more formal investigations. Only more complex cases are dealt with as Stage 2 investigations.
- 1.6 Further changes were introduced from April 2017, when a new way of handling complaints about social work services was introduced across Scotland. This brings the social work procedure more in line with the procedure already used across the rest of the Council. This will mean that all complaints will be included in the Council's Annual Complaints Performance Report, in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. In addition, changes are being made to align NHS complaints and social work complaints to support services and improvements within the Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 1.7 This report will be the last report, which incorporates Housing and Social Work. Future reports to Committee will reflect new service arrangements, which came into effect on 1 April 2018.

2 PROGRESS SINCE LAST REPORT

- 2.1 The Customer Liaison Team Leader is a key member of the Quality Assurance Group within Adult Social Work Services. The Complaints Scrutiny Group within Housing scrutinise and monitor complaints activities. Team managers provide an overview of learning from complaints and share improvement actions.
- 2.2 Information and training sessions have continued across the service and we will continue to take the opportunity to provide this, where required.
- 2.3 The Customer Liaison Team are continuing to explore closer joint working with health colleagues and how information can be shared in terms of the localities and improvements. A bi-monthly joint complaints report with Health is produced for the Health and Social Care Partnership.

3. COMPLAINTS NUMBERS AND ANALYSIS 2017/18

- 3.1 This section summarises the number and types of complaints reported and provides a comparison with the previous 12 months. Services have been undergoing significant transformational change to improve the way they deliver services to meet rising demand, public expectation and challenging financial times. This all has a bearing on the number and type of complaints the service receives. Despite this, due to improvement activity, there has been a 50 % reduction in the number of complaints, at Stage 2, relating to service delivery.

- 3.2 Table 1 provides an overview of the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints split between Social Work Services and Non-Social Work Services. It is worth noting that the majority of complaints received were resolved at the first point of contact, with only a small number progressing to Stage 2.

Table 1: Complaints received

	16/17	17/18	% change
Social work services			
Stage 1	65	99	+ 52.3%
Stage 2	20	14	- 30%
Non social work services			
Stage 1	521	522	+ 0.1%
Stage 2	50	40	- 20%

Although the numbers of complaints recorded has increased significantly within Social Work Services, this is likely to be as a result of more robust recording as opposed to a decrease in the quality of services. Training on the new process has been provided to approximately 80 staff across Adult and Children's services.

Within non Social Work Services, the number of complaints has remained almost static between reporting years.

Table 2: Complaints in Relation to Service User Numbers

Service or Team	Number of Service Users	Number of Service Users	Number of Complaints & %	Number of Complaints & %
	2016-17	2017-18	2016-17	2017-18
Community Care	10,652	9,791	65 (0.6%) FLR	99 (1.0%) FLR
			20 (0.2%) Invest	14 (0.14%) Invest
Housing Repairs	21,606	20,643	267 (1.2%) FLR	237 (1.1%) FLR
			17 (0.07%) Invest	10 (0.08%) Invest
Locality Housing Teams	7,467 Houses	7,540	148 (1.9%) FLR	144 (1.9%) FLR
			23 (0.3%) Invest	18 (0.2%) Invest

FLR means Front Line Resolution. Invest means Investigation.

When taking into account the numbers of service users we have, the numbers of complaints continues to be relatively low.

However the data gathered from such complaints is an ideal way of understanding what customers think about our services and identifying improvement actions where required.

3.3 Social Work Complaints (Community Care)

In the reporting year, 99 complaints were dealt with by frontline staff, with a smaller number being investigated (14) at Stage 2. The largest amount of complaints related to provision of services. In addition, four Complaints Review Committees were held in this reporting year.

Complaints for this reporting have increased at Stage 1, but decreased at Stage 2.

A considerable amount of training has been carried out across the service to emphasise the importance of recording accurately our complaints activity. This would appear to be the most significant the reason for an increase in the stage 1 complaints figures between the two years.

Of the 14 Stage 2 investigations:

- 12 of the 14 (86%) complainants received an acknowledgement within the target time set of 3 working days.
- Service provision represents the largest reason for complaints
- Complaints are evenly spread across a number of teams, with no specific team being a hot spot.
- Four Complaints Review Committees were held in the reporting period.

3.3.1 Themes and Improvement actions

- Information about charging for services, especially Residential and Nursing care continues to be the subject of a number of complaints.

Improvement Action: Work is ongoing to train staff and provide suitable written material to improve this.

- Lack of clarity about the status of Power of Attorney documents and the powers contained in them has also been the subject of a number of complaints.

Improvement Action: Work is ongoing to provide training with support from Legal Services on this subject. In addition, a new procedure to ensure all relevant documents are scanned onto the client index system is being introduced.

- Failure to respond to telephone calls and letters timeously continues to be an issue causing complaints to be made or escalated.
- Poor Customer Care and communication are a key element of many of the complaints we deal with.

Improvement Action: Ongoing customer care training for frontline staff and closer monitoring of response timescales.

3.4 Other service complaints (Housing and Finance and Support Services)

Between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, there were 521 complaints which were dealt with and resolved by frontline services and 40 complaints which were investigated under stage 2. Of those investigated:-

- 37 (93%) received their acknowledgements within the target time of 3 working days.
- 25 (71%) of the responses sent were within the target time of 20 working days. Where responses were delayed, complainants were given information about a new target date.
- Complaints about Housing Repairs made up 25% of the 40 stage 2 complaints. This can be attributed to the fact that Housing repairs is a high volume activity with approximately 29,000 repairs, alterations and safety checks being undertaken each year.

3.4.1 Themes and Improvement Actions

- Failure to respond to telephone calls and letters timeously linked to customer care and communication are key issues within many of the complaints we deal with.

Improvement Action: Ongoing customer care training for frontline staff and closer monitoring of response timescales

- An increase in issues with external contractors in relation to Housing Repairs and tenants not being kept up to date with the status and progress of their repairs.

Improvement Actions: There has been an increase in complaints regarding our Gas Contractor. These have been raised with the contractor at monthly contactor progress meetings and improvement actions have been agreed. Ongoing monitoring is underway.

The introduction of a number of improvements through the Housing Repairs Transformation project including:

- New locality working arrangements
- The introduction of mobile working, repairs scheduler and online reporting
- Training for repairs call centre staff including job shadowing, scripts and improved call back technology
- The introduction of “how to fix” online videos

- Issues around charging for services in Community Care, and delays in sending out invoices caused a spike in complaints within Finance and Support Services.

Improvement Actions: A review of the Charging Team has been undertaken with a number of improvement actions being progressed to address these issues.

4. Customer Satisfaction- What else do our customers tell us about the services they receive?

Tenant Satisfaction PKC	2016-17	2017-18
% of tenants satisfied with Perth and Kinross Council as a landlord	85.2%	82.9%
% of tenants who have had a repair completed in the last year satisfied with the service they received	79.5%	75.8%
% of service users satisfied with the management of our Gypsy/ Travellers site	47.1%	Will be asked in separate survey
% of tenants who think the rent for their property represents good value for money?	84.8%	85.3%
% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home?	84.7%	82.2%

The Social Work Customer Satisfaction survey has not yet been undertaken for this year therefore there is no up to date data available.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) notes the contents of this report and the impact that feedback from customers has had on improving services
- (ii) notes the improvement actions outlined to support and improve how we handle complaints and improve the customer experience.
- (iii) refers this report to the Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Housing and Environment)	18 April 2018

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	None
Corporate Plan	None
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1 Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement N/A

Corporate Plan N/A

2. Resource Implications

Financial N/A

Workforce N/A

Asset Management (land, property, IT) N/A

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment N/A

Strategic Environmental Assessment N/A

Sustainability N/A

Legal and Governance N/A

Risk N/A

4. Consultation

Internal

The following people have been consulted regarding the content of this report.

Diane Fraser, Head of Adult Social Work and Social Care
Jacqueline Pepper, Chief Social work Officer

The Tenant Committee Panel, who commented as follows:

“It is good that there is a similar and more aligned complaints procedure and also improved training for all staff which has been recognised in the reduction of Stage 2 complaints.”

5. Communication

None

6. Background Papers

None

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Community Care Stage 2 - 1 April 2017 – 30 March 2018
Appendix 2: Complaints concerning Non Social Work Services